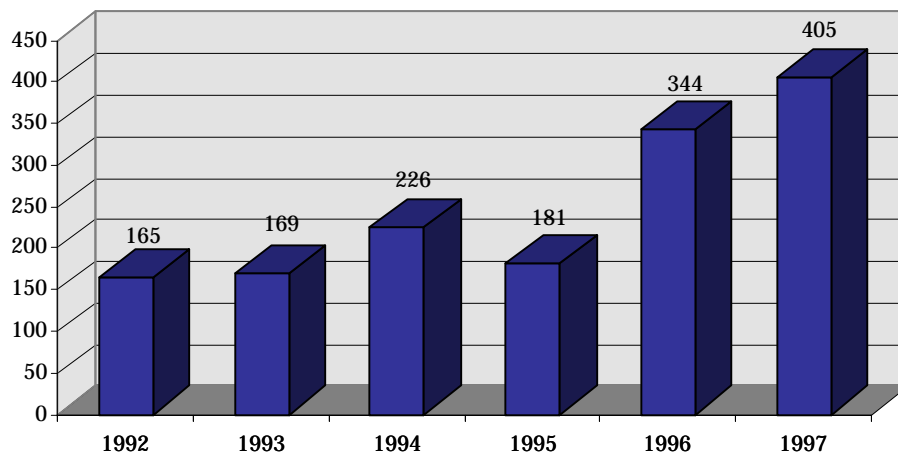


***~ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ~***

***Participating Agencies***

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been collecting data on hate crimes since 1991, under the Hate Crimes Reporting Act of 1990. ***1997 represents the second year that the state has reached the reporting maximum with virtually 100% participation in hate crime reporting by municipal and campus police departments, State Police, and MBTA police throughout the Commonwealth.*** A record total of **405** law enforcement agencies participated in the Commonwealth's hate crime reporting program during 1997.

**Agency Participation 1992 - 1997**



Hate crime occurrences were reported by **109** local police departments, the State Police, the MBTA, and **13** campus police agencies. A total of **465** hate crime reports were filed by these agencies reflecting 465 separate hate crime episodes, which included **754** criminal offenses and **540** bias motivations. An additional **262** police departments reported “zero” hate crimes during 1997.

Despite a slight increase in the number of agencies submitting hate crime data in 1997, Massachusetts has experienced a notable decrease in the total number of hate crimes reported. This finding closely mirrors the decrease in the Part 1 Crime Index Totals occurring throughout the Commonwealth in 1997. When these data are more closely analyzed, it appears that the distribution among the various covered bias categories and types of crimes involved in reported episodes have remained roughly constant from 1996 to 1997.

## ***Hate Crime in Massachusetts 1997 Annual Report***

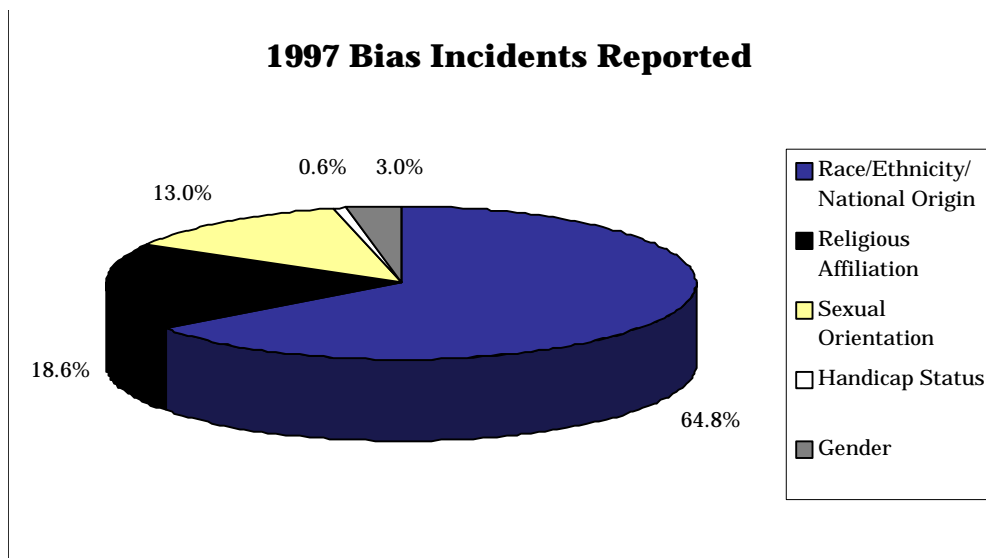
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Despite full agency participation, the asymmetry of the breakdown of reported hate crimes occurrences across the Commonwealth in relation to distribution of population overall and of minority groups, suggests persistent underreporting in some areas. Thoroughness of reporting hate crimes is not uniform throughout all jurisdictions in the Commonwealth. For that reason, reports of few or no occurrences for larger and ethnically and culturally diverse communities may be more indicative of weak identification, investigation, and reporting of hate crimes than an accurate count of actual hate crimes.

### ***Categories of Bias Reported***

Bias incidents break down as follows: of the **540** bias motivations for particular crimes reported, race/ethnicity/national origin bias constituted the largest category of reported motives, with **64.8%** of the total. Offenses related to religious affiliation were the second most frequent category, with **18.6%** of the total. Offenses motivated by sexual orientation bias were the third most prevalent, with **13%**, while offenses against gender and disability status were reported as **3%** and **.6%** of the total, respectively.

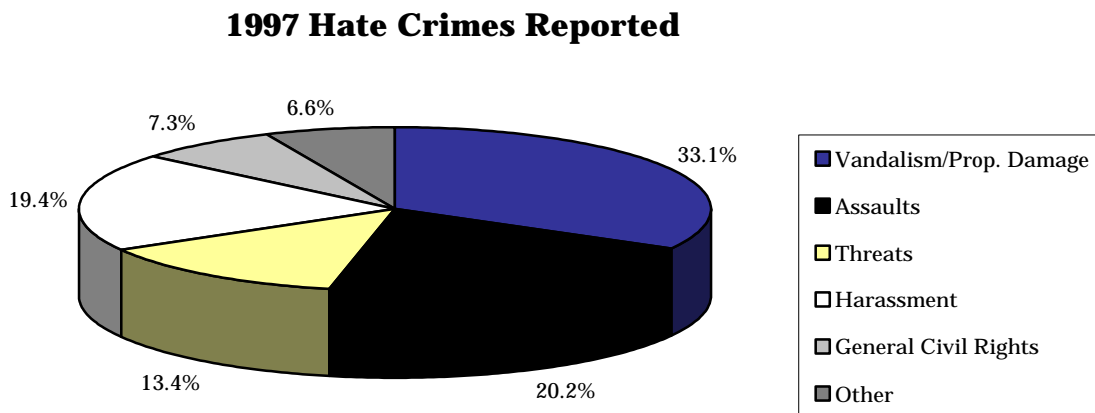
The data reflect largely uniform rates of decrease in levels of crime attributed to the various included categories of bias. An exception is a reported increase in anti-Semitic crimes from **78** in **1996** to **91** in **1997**. Sexual orientation-related hate crimes registered only a slight decrease in the record high levels reported in 1996. Moreover, levels of reported disability bias and gender bias crimes are too low and geographically confined to warrant observations as those categories.



### ***Categories of Crimes Reported***

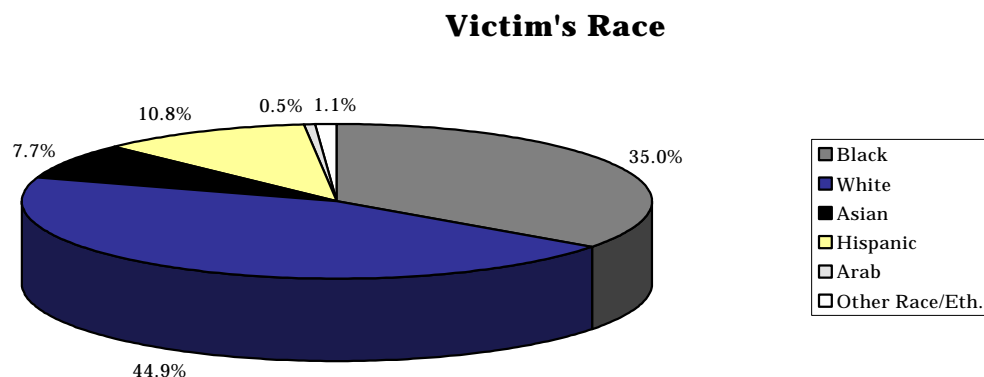
Of the total **754** criminal offenses reported, acts of vandalism and property damage were the most frequent offenses, representing **33.1%** of the total. Other frequent crime categories were assaults **20.2%**, harassment **19.4%**, threats **13.4%**, and general civil rights violations **7.3%**. Other types of crimes were reported in **6.6%** of cases.

A few crime categories stand apart from the overall decline in reported hate crimes from 1996 to 1997. Incidents of simple assault or assault and battery increased from **81** in **1996** to **85** in **1997**. Harassment remained stable at roughly the same level.



### ***Victim Profile***

The victim of hate crimes (in the **428** cases where information on the victim's race was available) was white in **44.9%** of cases, black in **35%** of cases, Hispanic in **10.8%** of cases, Asian in **7.7%** of cases, and Arab in **.5%** of cases. **59.4%** of victims were male in the **426** cases where this information was available. The average age of the victim was **29** years old and **59.4%** of victims were male.

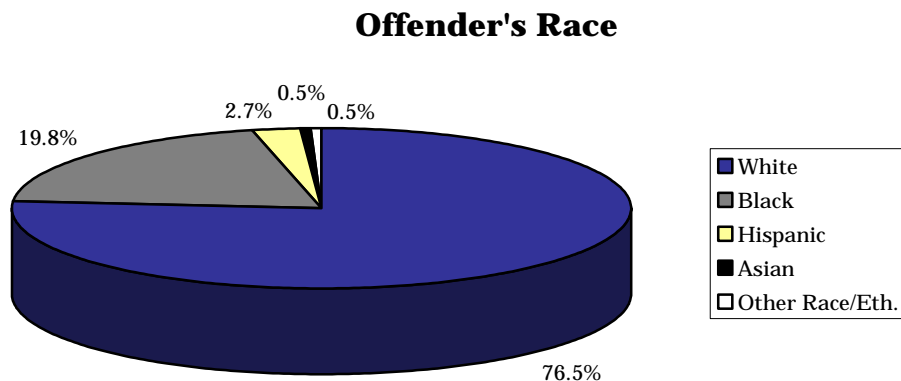


## ***Hate Crime in Massachusetts 1997 Annual Report***

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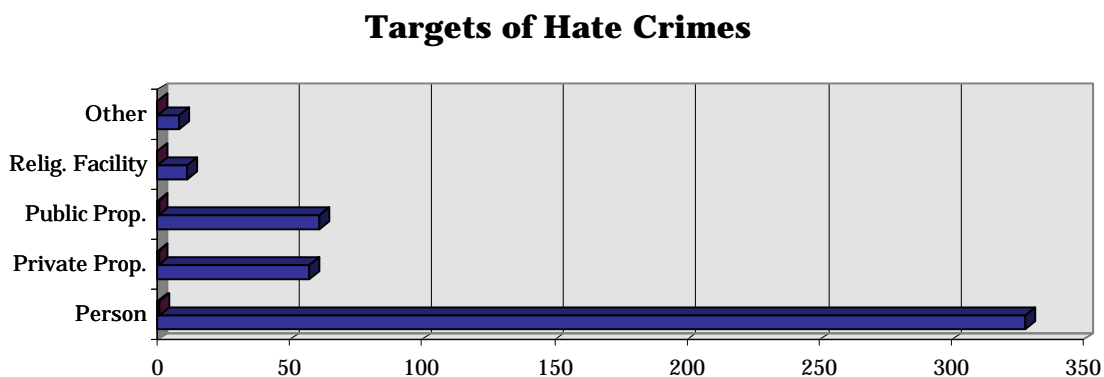
### ***Offender Profile***

The perpetrator of hate crimes was White in **76.5%** of cases, Black in **19.8%** of cases, Hispanic in **2.7%** of cases, and Asian in **.5%** of cases where this information was available (**405 cases**). The perpetrator was male in **81.1%** of the **413** cases where gender was known. ***It is particularly significant that 66% of hate crime perpetrators were under the age of 20 years old.***



### ***Targets of Hate Crimes***

The most frequent targets of hate crimes were individuals (**70.5%** of **465 cases**), followed by private property (**12.3%**).



### ***Prior Offenses Involving Reported Victims or Locations***

In **13.6%** of the **352** cases for which this information is available, victims or locations reported being targeted in hate crimes at least once in the past.

***Details of the Offense***

The most frequently reported location of hate crimes was in or around a home or residence (**28%** of the **470** cases), followed by a highway or road (**21.9%**). **15.7%** of incidents as to which location is known occurred on school or college campuses. A weapon was used in **43.6%** of all reported incidents.

School or college-based hate crimes increased from **66** in **1996** to **74** in **1997**. Part of the increase appears attributable to improved reporting by campus police agencies. The Task Force is particularly concerned about underreporting of hate crimes that occur in middle and high schools. Problems may include failures to identify bias crimes against students, lack of coordination between schools and law enforcement agencies on civil rights matters, and victims not knowing where to go for help.

***Police Response to Hate Crimes***

An arrest was made in **22.8%** of the **250** cases for which this information was supplied.

***Role of Organized Hate Groups***

There was evidence of an organized hate group in only **3%** of cases. Such evidence might be the existence of printed hate literature, or distinctive clothing or patches on the perpetrators.